

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00270 201520Z

44

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SUBJECT: BOURASSA ELECTION CALL TOUGH ON UNIONS. OPPOSITION
GREETINGS ELECTION IN PREDICTABLE FASHION.

REF: MONTREAL 1550, QUEBEC 266

1. LABOR ISSUE: IN ADDITION TO HIS EXPECTED PLEA FOR
QUEBECOIS SUPPORT IN HIS UPCOMING CONSTITUTIONAL NEGOTIATIONS
WITH OTTAWA, PREMIER BOURASSA ASSUMED VERY TOUGH STANCE
VIS-A-VIS PUBLIC SERVICE UNIONS IN MESSAGE ANNOUNCING ELECTION.
CITING LABOR UNREST WHICH PROVINCE HAS RECENTLY EXPERIENCED,
PREMIER SAID COMING ELECTION WILL GIVE QUEBECOIS AN OPPOR-
TUNITY TO RE-EVALUATE THE EQUILIBRIUM OF SOCIAL GROUPS
WITHIN OUR SOCIETY. HE REITERATED COMPLAINTS THAT 12
YEAR-OLD RIGHT TO STRIKE IN PUBLIC SERVICES HAS BEEN ABUSED
AND PROMISED HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD OPEN QUOTES CHANGE PRESENT

SITUATION. CLOSE QUOTES HE THUS IMPLIED THAT
LEGISLATION WILL BE INTRODUCED TO LIMIT RIGHT-TO-STRIKE
IN MANY AREAS OF PUBLIC SECTOR. MOST OBSERVERS ASSUME
HEALTH WORKERS AND PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL WILL CERTAINLY
BE AFFECTED. TEACHERS MAY ALSO BE INCLUDED. THIS WOULD BE
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PAGE 02 QUEBEC 00270 201520Z

MAJOR TURNING POINT IN GOVERNMENT-LABOR RELATIONS IN QUEBEC.

2. COMMENT: WHILE IT WAS EXPECTED THAT BOURASSA WOULD USE PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS ABUSE OF RIGHT TO STRIKE AS ELECTION ISSUE, HE CAME DOWN ON THEM HARDER THAN ANTICIPATED. CERTAINLY THE STRIKES OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE UNIONS WERE WIDELY UNPOPULAR - ESPECIALLY AMONG HOSPITAL WORKERS - BUT SUCH DIRECT CONFLICT COULD LOSE MORE VOTES THAN IT WINS IF NOT MANAGED WELL. BOURASSA DID NOT EXPLAIN IN HIS SPEECH WHY HE DID NOT ADOPT SUCH LABOR LEGISLATION IN THE MORE THAN SIX YEARS HIS GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN IN POWER OR WHY HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DO SO IN THE NEXT YEAR USING HIS OVERWHELMING PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. AS GAZETTE EDITORIAL CITED IN REFTEL STATES, LABOR PLANK IN ELECTION MANIFESTO IS ODD GIVEN GOVERNMENT'S OPEN QUOTES INEPTITUDE CLOSE QUOTES IN NEGOTIATIONS IN LAST 3 YEARS. AS MOST QUEBECOIS ARE AWARE, THOSE ACTIONS WHICH BOURASSA'S ADMINISTRATION ADOPTED TO WEAKEN CONTROL OVER CONSTRUCTION UNIONS BY CORRUPT OFFICERS WERE TAKEN ONLY WHEN CLICHE COMMISSION REVELATIONS PUT GOQ'S BACK TO WALL. BACK-TO-WORK LAWS IN PUBLIC SECTOR ALSO CAME DUE TO NECESSITY OF MOMENT RATHER THAN GOQ STRATEGY. WITH THIS BACKGROUND, BOURASSA MAY HAVE TROUBLE EXECUTING WHAT APPEARS TO BE A PLAN TO TAR PARTI QUEBECOIS WITH ASSOCIATION WITH LABOR RADICALS. FOR ITS PART, THE PQ IN ITS QUEST FOR A MODERATE IMAGE IS AVOIDING THE CLEAR PRO-LABOR IMAGE IT ONCE HAD.

3. PARTY LEADERS: WHILE PARTY ORGANIZERS SCRAMBLED TO FINISH ASSEMBLING THEIR SLATES OF CANDIDATES, LEADERS GREETED ELECTION CALL IN PREDICTABLE FASHION. RENE LEVESQUE ANNOUNCING HE WILL RUN IN TAILLON RIDING SOUTH OF MONTREAL, CALLED ELECTION A OPEN QUOTED GODSENT CLOSE QUOTES OPPORTUNITY FOR QUEBECOIS TO RID THEMSELVES OF BOURASSA A YEAR AHEAD OF TIME. HE ATTACKED GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY TO GOVERN DECENTLY AND PREMIER'S OPEN QUOTES PANICKY DECISION TO TRY AND SAVE HIS PRECIOUS CAREER BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE CLOSE QUOTES. HE CONCLUDED THAT A MAN WHO CANNOT GOVERN WITH 100 OF 110 DEPUTIES DOES NOT DESERVE ANOTHER MANDATE.

4. RODRIGUE BIRON, HEAD OF UNION NATIONALE WHICH SOME UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 QUEBEC 00270 201520Z

OBSERVERS SEE AS MAKING SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN RURAL AREAS WHICH WERE ONCE PARTY STRONGHOLD AND AMONG ANGLOPHONES IN MONTREAL, SAID BOURASSA CALLED ELECTION BECAUSE OF INABILITY TO GOVERN. HE SAID BOURASSA MOVED THIS YEAR TO CATCH UN BEFORE ITS RISING POPULARITY COULD BEAR FRUIT. JEROME CHOQUETTE OF PARTI NATIONAL POPULAIRE CALLED CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE A SMOKE SCREEN FOR GOQ'S CARELESSNESS. HE PREDICTED GOVERNMENT WILL END UP DISCREDITING ITSELF.

FINALLY, CAMILL SAMSON OF PARTI CREDITISTE PREDICTED
ELECTION WILL RESULT IN A MINORITY GOVERNMENT FORMED BY
EITHER THE LIBERALS, PQ, OR HIS OWN PARTY. THIS WOULD
NOT BE BAD THING, HE ADDED WITH EVIDENT SELF SATISFACTION.
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